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ACTION: EUR-25

INFO: OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-13 NIC-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 522
INFO USMISSION USUN

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SUBJECT: JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

REF: USUN 3821, STATE 211168 DEF

1. WE SHARE DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN OVER VIOLENT ACTIVITIES OF JDL WHICH MFA TELLS US PROVIDED BASIS FOR NEW SOVIET PROTEST IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY.

2. REGARDING JDL MILITANCY, WE NOTE FOLLOWING TRENDS:

(A) INCIDENTS HAVE CONTINUED FOR FULL YEAR.

(B) THEY HAVE ESCALATED IN VIOLENCE, MOVING FROM DISRUPTION OF THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES TO VANDALISM, THREATS AGAINST PERSONAL SAFETY OF SOVIET PERSONNEL, RANSACKING OF OFFICES, AND AT LEAST ENDORSEMENT IF NOT PERPETRATION OF BOMBING.

(C) NO ONE YET HAS BEEN PUNISHED, ALTHOUGH TRIALS ARE SCHEDULED.

(D) SOVIETS HAVE FINALLY BEGUN TO RETALIATE, ALTHOUGH IN CONTROLLED FASHION.

3. AS SEEN FROM HERE, PRESENT OUTLOOK POINTS TOWARD A WORSENING SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IF SOVIETS STAGE ADDITIONAL TRIALS OF JEWS. CONTINUED JDL VIOLENCE AGAINST SOVIETS IN US CAN NOW BE EXPECTED.

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TO PRODUCE SOVIET RETALIATORY ACTIONS HERE, RATHER THAN SIMPLY PROTEST.

4. MILITANT ACTIONS OF THIS SMALL GROUP, WHICH DOES NOT HAVE SUPPORT OF MAJOR BODIES OF THEIR OWN FAITH, HAVE BEEN GROWING IRRITANT IN US-USSR RELATIONS THIS PAST YEAR. IF CONTINUED, THEY THREATEN TO DISRUPT OUR RELATIONS AND THEREBY TO DISTRACT BOTH GOVERNMENTS FROM SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT HAND.

5. WE BELIEVE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER FACT JDL HARASSMENT CONTINUES AND NO PROSPECT OF CESSATION SEEMS IN SIGHT. SOVIETS CANNOT BELIEVE USG IS HELPLESS. THEREFORE THEY SUSPECT THAT EITHER WE ARE ACTUALLY CONNIVING WITH MILITANTS, BY FAILING TO STOP OR TO PUNISH THEM, OR THAT OUR POLICY TOWARD THE USSR IS BASED ON VARIABLE DOMESTIC FACTORS. IN EITHER CASE, SOVIETS WILL BRING INTO QUESTION THE DECLARED AIM OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO MOVE FROM CONFRONTATION TO NEGOTIATION.

6. WE BELIEVE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SIGNAL USG OVER POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF CONTINUED JDL MILITANCE. INITIALLY THEY TRIED PROTESTS, THEN CANCELLED BOLSHOI OPERA-BALLET TOUR, IN PART BECAUSE OF JDL, AND NOW ARE DIRECTING PROTESTS (AND THREATS) AGAINST EMBASSY AND STAFF IN EFFORT PERSUADE USG TO TAKE PREVENTIVE ACTION BEFORE ACTIONS AND COUNTER-ACTIONS BEGIN TO SNOWBALL.

7. POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION THAT US AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN GROUPS MIGHT STIMULATE TO DAMPEN DOWN THIS SITUATION INCLUDE:

(A) CLIMATE-SETTING PUBLIC STATEMENT AT HIGH LEVELS OF USG REAFFIRMING RIGHT OF PEACEFUL PROTEST, BUT CONDEMNING RESORT TO VIOLENCE. USG OBLIGATION UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW TO PROTECT FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK OVERRIDES RIGHTS OF DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS WHICH THREATEN THESE MISSIONS.

(B) JOINT PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF JDL VIOLENCE BY RESPONSIBLE NATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS (AS GOLDA MEIR CONDEMNED JDL TACTICS).

(C) ENERGETIC EFFORTS BY NYC AUTHORITIES TO BRING JDL MILITANTS TO TRIAL.

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(D) ALERTING AMERICAN PUBLIC (THROUGH RESPONSIBLE MEDIA)
OF THE INHERENT DANGERS TO LARGER INTERESTS IN US-USSR RELATIONS
IF VIOLENCE CONTINUES;

(E) INJUNCTION AGAINST JDL (AS PROPOSED BY USUN).

8. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE SITUATION IS COMPLICATED. REVULSION
IS HIGH OVER MOSCOW'S TREATMENT OF SOVIET JEWS. RIGHTS OF
AMERICAN CITIZENS UNDER OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM MUST BE PROTECTED.
ADEQUATE SECURITY MEASURES ARE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN. PERHAPS
OUR RELATIONS WITH THE USSR ARE DESTINED TO WORSEN FURTHER BECAUSE
OF JDL VIOLENCE. WE NEED THEREFORE TO MAKE SURE THAT SUCH AN
UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCE CANNOT BE PORTRAYED AS RESULTING FROM
OUR INDIFFERENCE OR INACTION. GP-3
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